

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6703

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 3, 2010

Title: An act relating to online nursing programs.

Brief Description: Regarding online nursing programs.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, King, Keiser, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Hargrove and Kilmer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/02/10, 2/03/10 [DP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kilmer, Chair; Kastama, Vice Chair; Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Shin, Stevens and Tom.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Pflug.

Staff: Alicia Kinne (786-7784)

Background: Lower Columbia College (LCC) currently offers an online nursing program. The theory courses are completed in an online format and students are required to be on campus for some skills, lab components, and all clinical courses. Students have the option of completing the program as either full-time or part-time students. At the end of the program students will have earned an Associate in Applied Science degree.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature encourages the development of more eLearning programs, such as the online nursing program at LCC. Further, the Legislature finds that programs such as the online nursing program at LCC should be shared, replicated, and expanded to the greatest extent possible.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill encourages public-private partnerships to grow the availability of programs in high demand fields such as nursing. The demand for qualified nurses is outpacing the supply across the state. The current program at LCC reaches students in rural communities and should be expanded to serve the needs of more urban areas as well.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Franklin, prime sponsor; Laura Brener, Helen Kuebel, LCC; Madeleine Thompson, Workforce Board; Lisa Thatcher, Washington State Hospital Association.